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ABSTRACT

This booklet provides a history of the role played by extracurricular activities in American secondary education, summarizing their objectives, principles, and problems, and classifying their types. The student-activity concept is traced through four stages of historical development in the United States. Noting that the objectives of cocurricular activities keep pace with the changing activity goals of schools, the authors then compare five compilations of cocurricular objectives specified by five research studies conducted between 1931 and 1975. Turning from history to the needs of present-day school programs, the authors provide school leaders with 16 principles for guidance in achieving educational goals. A taxonomy of extra-class activities is supplied to aid local schools in assessing the breadth of their programs. Finally, the common problems in extracurricular activities are analyzed: student participation, sponsorship and faculty participation, and scheduling of activities. (JW)

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Cocurricular Activity Programs

In Secondary Schools

By Ronald E. Gholson and Robert L. Buser

Division of Student Activities
National Association of Secondary School Principals

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Introduction

A variety of terms have been used to identify and describe the more student-oriented portions of the school program. These include extracurricular, extra-school, noncurricular, semicurricular, paracurricular, cocurricular, the supplementary curriculum, the third curriculum, the other curriculum, school activities, and student activities.

While terms and definitions differ, however, writers typically agree that cocurricular activities are more student-centered than are school subjects or classes. Agreement exists, too, that these activities generally include music, drama, subject-related clubs, student publications, student government, assemblies, and social, hobby, and service organizations.

Cocurricular activities vary from school to school. They are determined more by tradition, expectations, and policies of local schools and their respective publics than by written educational philosophies. Change, flexibility, and adaptability characterize the cocurricular component of the educational program perhaps more than the more traditional classroom component of American education.

Since the early 1900s schools have modified and expanded their programs of studies so that what was once considered extracurricular is now incorporated into the curriculum. Today it is common for schools to offer band, chorus, student publications, drama, and physical education-related experiences for credit. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for students to earn credits toward graduation for away-from-school work experience, school or community service, educational tours, leadership training activities, and cultural-language studies abroad.

History

The fabric of American secondary education was woven by a process that combined the thread of individual student need with that of the public welfare. While that process has remained basically unchanged throughout the years, an ever increasing variety of programs, services, and alternatives has been developed to meet the changing demands with which education has been confronted.

The emergence of student activity programs in American schools during the late nineteenth century illustrates the capacity of that educational structure to address demands placed upon it. It is also a manifestation of the transition from an agrarian to a more complex industrial and urban culture. This was a dynamic economic, social, and political era, and the growth of the extra-class or student activity facet of the educational system accelerated during that time.

The student activity concept has undergone several stages of development. Faunce (1960) identified three distinct periods in that process.

The first was an era typified by rejection and apathy, if not opposition, on the part of educational leaders. The prevailing view was one of concern only for the formal in-school and academic aspects of student life. Thus, activities were typically organized to take place outside of the school. Organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America, chartered in the United States in 1910, and followed shortly by the Girl Scouts are representative of the era. Secret organizations such as sororities and fraternities were also fairly common.

The second period has been described as one of passive acceptance. School authorities concluded that student organizations were a reality and that some monitoring—indeed control—by the school was needed.

In the third stage, which began about 1920, education writers started to describe activity programs as vital and productive facets of the school setting.

Significant developments during this phase included the report on the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, formulated by the National Education Association in 1917-1918. These seven principles served as a foundation upon which to build school-sponsored activities. Programs related to the worthy use of leisure

time, citizenship, ethical character, and health were viewed as legitimate goals for local schools (Dee, 1965). Student activity program analyses began to appear in the reports of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education as early as 1913.

In 1917, Elbert K. Fretwell, frequently referred to as the "father of extracurricular activities" introduced the first course devoted to the study of such activities (Graham, 1969). That course, offered at Columbia University, marked the beginning of a long and productive career by Fretwell, devoted in part to the legitimization of extracurricular activities in American educational institutions. In fact, Fretwell (1931) authored one of the first textbooks published on the subject.

In 1926, the National Society for the Study of Education devoted Part II of its annual *Yearbook* to the subject of extracurricular activities. This effort produced added incentive for educational personnel to include activities such as student council, forensics, dramatics, and athletics as integral parts of the school program (Wood, 1962).

Other third-phase developments included the publication of some 40 books related to the activity component of school systems. Two journals, *School Activities* (1929), and *Student Life* (1934), were established (McKowen, 1952). A student of Fretwell, McKowen served as editor of *School Activities* and published a number of manuals related to student activity programs.

The National Association of Student Councils (NASC) was formed in 1930. Originally affiliated with the National Education Association, by 1943 NASC was sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). Today the NASSP also sponsors the National Honor Society and the National Junior Honor Society. Through publications, convention programs, training sessions, and leadership seminars, NASSP continues its commitment to the educational potential of school activity programs.

During the third phase local, regional, and national student organizations grew rapidly. Student participation and control of "their" organizations continued to expand during this period. The philosophy of Dewey and his followers who, during the first three decades of the twentieth century, viewed secondary education as ". . . pragmatic, instrumental, pluralistic, relativistic, and experimental" was reflected in the activity developments in American schools (Frederick, 1965). The historical view of "opposing, rejecting, and ignoring" the activity component of student life outside the school—thus the term "extra-curricular" activities—waned during this phase of "extra-class" activities development (Terry, 1930).

Since the 1940s the developmental process has continued. Characterized by a variety of significant changes, the fourth and current stage in the history of activity programs in the United

States is one of fusion between school and nonschool activities, agencies, and institutions.

The objectives and goals that have been identified with the cocurricular program are characteristic of the changes and the development of activity programs in the nation's schools. In the section that follows we review those objectives which appear to have captured the breadth of function and purpose for the cocurricular activity program.

Objectives

Although there are perhaps as many objectives for student activities as there are participants it is appropriate to identify some of the more classic activity objective statements.

During the third phase of activity program development, Fretwell (1931) suggested "Seven Sign-Posts" of student activities. They are:

- The school shall develop a constructive program of extracurricular activities. (Fretwell suggested there had been too much of a laissez-faire attitude toward both curricular and extracurricular activities in the school.)
- The constructive plan of extracurricular activities shall grow out of the life of the school.
- The constructive plan shall recognize that the pupil is a citizen of the school.
- Teachers shall accept, wholeheartedly, the responsibility of developing the school's extracurricular activities.
- Extracurricular activities shall be supervised.
- Intelligent public opinion shall be developed.
- The principal is responsible.

Perhaps the most comprehensive list of general functions of extra-class activities was proposed by Miller, Moyer, and Patrick in 1956.

Contributions to Students:

1. to provide opportunities for the pursuit of established interests and the development of new interests
2. to educate for citizenship through experiences and insights that stress leadership, fellowship, cooperation, and independent action
3. to develop school spirit and morale
4. to provide opportunities for satisfying the gregarious urge of children and youth
5. to encourage moral and spiritual development
6. to strengthen the mental and physical health of students

7. to provide for well-rounded social development of students
8. to widen student contacts
9. to provide opportunities for students to exercise their creative capacities more fully.

Contributions to Curriculum Improvement:

1. to supplement or enrich classroom experiences
2. to explore new learning experiences which may ultimately be incorporated into the curriculum
3. to provide additional opportunity for individual and group guidance
4. to motivate classroom instruction.

Contributions to More Effective School Administration:

1. to foster more effective teamwork between students, faculty, and administrative and supervisory personnel
2. to integrate more closely the several divisions of the school system
3. to provide less restricted opportunities designed to assist youth in the worthwhile utilization of their spare time
4. to enable teachers to better understand the forces that motivate pupils to react as they do to many of the problematic situations with which they are confronted.

Contributions to the Community:

1. to promote better school and community relations
2. to encourage greater community interest in and support of the school.

While these statements certainly represent philosophical positions and value judgments about why students might participate in activities, there is no doubt that extra-class activity programs are very much a part and function of today's American educational system. Such programs are generally a product of the twentieth century, and have had continuous growth and acceptance since the 1920s.

Graham (1964) suggested the following rationale for the growth and acceptance of extra-class activities:

- Parents liked to see their children perform.
- Teachers enjoyed student activities more than the classroom.
- Teachers received more reward for success in the student activities field than in academic work.
- Young people liked them.
- They grew as the country and nation became more urban—there were no more chores to keep kids busy.
- They grew because they filled the "boredom" of the small town.
- They grew as more and more young people attended schools.

In an attempt to get beyond the somewhat idealistic reasons suggested by educators as to why students participate in activities, one of the writers directed a 1973 study of some 2,000 students in Illinois secondary schools. Students were asked to rank 18 reasons

for their participation in activity programs. The rank order with percent rating "extremely" or "highly" important was:

- for fun and personal enjoyment (86%);
- for personal achievement (81%);
- as an outlet for individual needs and special interests (68%);
- to broaden personal and social contacts (64%);
- to achieve popularity and social status (54%);
- to explore experiences not available in the regular school program (53%);
- because friends participate (49%);
- to develop leadership activities (49%);
- to earn awards, letters, prizes (47%);
- to prepare for a vocation (47%);
- to please parents and family (42%);
- to prepare to become more effective citizens (40%);
- to participate in the identification and solution of school problems (33%);
- to serve the school (32%);
- to supplement and enrich the classroom (31%);
- to improve relations with teachers and administrators (27%);
- to get picture in yearbook (21%);
- because teachers expect it (8%) (Buser and Long, 1974).

In a 1975 study supported by NASSP, some 2,500 randomly selected students from schools throughout the country were asked to rank order the same list of reasons for their participation in extra-class activities. The results of the national survey were:

- for personal achievement (97%);
- for fun and personal enjoyment (95%);
- to have an outlet for individual needs and interests (95%);
- for experiences not available in the regular school program (92%);
- to broaden personal and social contacts (91%);
- to develop leadership abilities (91%);
- to earn awards, letters, prizes (90%);
- to please parents (86%);
- to become a more effective citizen (86%);
- to achieve popularity and status (85%);
- to help solve school problems (84%);
- to prepare for a vocation (84%);
- to serve the school (83%);
- to supplement or enrich classroom experiences (81%);
- because friends participate (80%);
- to improve relations with teachers (80%);
- to get picture in yearbook (56%);
- because teachers expect it (48%) (Long, et al., 1977).

Perhaps the most telling justification of the "why" of activity programs is found in the responses of the student participants as

reported above. Extra-class activity programs are well founded, however, in the most basic of educational principles—from the Seven Cardinal Principles to those specific goal and mission statements developed annually by school districts throughout the nation. The philosophical, psychological, and cultural foundations of extra-class activity programs are founded with both "sound theory" and "sound practice."

In addition, however, specific principles should be considered by school leaders when assessing the theoretical as well as the practical aspects of the activity program.

Principles

McKowen (1952) concluded, as do these writers, that a school with only extracurricular activities would be as absurd as a school without them. A school's objectives cannot be effectively fulfilled without an extra-class component. The leisure, recreational, social, and emotional needs of all students may best be met by the extra-class activity program.

The activity program should provide self-directed specialization in areas of the curriculum of special interest to the student. The development of desirable social attitudes on the part of individuals and groups represents still another principle of the activity program. Cooperation and understanding among social, racial, and ethnic groups in the student body as well as in out-of-school life is another worthwhile characteristic of the extra-class activity program. A most basic expectation of the activity program is the degree to which students share responsibility for selecting, organizing, and evaluating the program and its outcomes. Finally, the development of democratic and cooperative values is a primary principle of the extra-class program (Buser, 1978).

Listed below are 16 principles to which educators at the middle or junior high school levels might address themselves when assessing their extra-class activity programs. These principles should be considered from two perspectives—that which is desired, and that which is achieved.

The extra-class activities program:

- is oriented to the needs and interests of pre- and early adolescent boys and girls
- is comprehensive enough to meet the needs of students
- is viewed as a worthy means of accomplishing the philosophy and goals of the school
- provides experiences that enhance the opportunity to develop responsibility, initiative, leadership, competencies, cooperation, and self-direction

- provides students with exploratory experiences that have physical, social, and emotional value for the present and future
- provides leisure time and recreational experiences that will have both immediate and carry-over value
- provides for widespread participation by the entire student body
- provides opportunities for students to participate in a representative, democratically functioning form of school government
- avoids emphasis on contests that exploit students for the benefit of the school, the teachers, the parents, or the community
- does not restrict participation on the basis of social, ethnic, financial, or academic factors
- is an integral part of the educational program
- is in proper perspective to the educational program in relation to teacher time, student time, school emphasis, school budget, facilities, and other factors
- generally schedules activities as part of the regular school day
- is under the supervision of interested, competent, qualified sponsors
- is recognized by the faculty as a worthwhile endeavor because they understand that it helps to meet pre- and early adolescent growth and development needs
- is systematically evaluated by students, faculty, community, and administration (*Middle School/Junior High School Evaluative Criteria*, 1979).

Activity program components are as varied as the districts and buildings in which they are found. What could be considered new and unique in one school district may well be deemed traditional in another. Likewise, a student organization may be called by a variety of names or titles depending upon the district or area, while the underlying purpose of the organization remains the same. A taxonomy of cocurricular activities follows.

Classifications

A Taxonomy of Extra-Class Activities

The kind and extent of activity program offerings will be related to school size, location, local tradition, point-in-time, community expectations, and student-faculty interests. The following taxonomy is designed to aid school personnel, researchers, and policy-making bodies in the task of assessing where the local school is or ought to be in the process of implementing a comprehensive extra-class activity program.

1. *Governance Related.* Those activities through which students participate in the direction and management of the local school. Organizations would include the student council, student senate, inter-club council, class officers, and student-faculty-administrator-parent advisory groups.
2. *School Publications Related.* These include the yearbook, newspaper, literary magazines, journalism clubs, photography clubs, and publication photographers.
3. *Honors Related.* Those activities that acknowledge individual student achievement in academics or school service. Organizations would include National Honor Society, Beta Club, Key Club, Quill and Scroll, and foreign language honor societies.
4. *Speech/Drama Related.* Those activities that are performance oriented, such as class plays, school plays, debate clubs, the National Forensics League, the National Thespian Society; as well as those that support production activities such as stage, sound, and lighting crews.
5. *Music Related.* Performance or leisure oriented activities such as band, orchestra, chorus, ensembles, drum-bugle corps, pep band, madrigal singers, color/honor guards, twirlers, musical productions, and folksinging and barbershop groups.
6. *Athletic and Sports Related.* Individual and team sports, interscholastic and intramural sports, as well as those activities directly related to their support. Included are activities such as basketball, bowling, golf, handball, aquatics, volleyball, baseball, soccer, cross country, letter clubs, and intramurals.
7. *Cheerleading and Pep Club Related.* This category includes cheerleaders, pep clubs, and pom pon groups that are closely associated with the support of interscholastic, primarily athletic, teams.
8. *Special Events Days.* This includes special school assemblies, awards programs, Baccalaureate, commencement, prom, pageants/festivals, trips/tours.
9. *Social Related.* Those activities that are designed to develop the socialization skills and the personal interests of students including dance, recreation, YMCA, YWCA, Hi-Y, and Y-Teens.
10. *Hobby and Leisure Related.* Those activities designed for personal interest that are primarily avocational in nature such as photography, chess, skiing, auto, riding, music, Judo-Karate, and roller skating.
11. *Service Related.* Those activities that have as a primary purpose serving the needs of the school and society, such as audiovisual, library, student patrol, and usher clubs, as well as the National Junior Red Cross, color guards, student

assistants to teachers/administrators and support staff, and ecology, peace club, model United Nations, and service to aging.

12. *Class Related.* Those activities that are primarily subject, school, and career oriented other than hobby, leisure, school service, and the arts. Examples included in this group are science, social studies, mathematics, diversified occupations, student nurses, Future Business Leaders of America, Distributive Education Clubs of America, Future Homemakers of America and Home Economics Related Occupations, Future Farmers of America, human relations, environment-ecology, Voice of Democracy clubs/organizations, language clubs, and future nurses clubs.

The following conclusions have been drawn from the findings of a 1976-77 Illinois Office of Education census of secondary school course offerings, enrollments, and cocurricular activities.

1. The "big three" categories in terms of offerings and participation levels were athletics/sports, class (subject), and music-related activities.
2. Participation in extra-class activities was inversely related to school size. Students in smaller schools participated more extensively in athletics, music, class publications, and governance related areas.
3. Athletics/sports-related activities drew the greatest portion of student participants, ranging from more than 90 percent in the very small schools to 35 percent in the very large schools. The state average was slightly less than 50 percent. Music and class (subject) related activities were second and third, with 22 percent and 20 percent respectively. Participation in governance, honors, service, cheerleading/pep, publications, social and hobby/leisure was less than 5 percent respectively for the state.
4. Female student involvement exceeds that of the males in all areas with the exception of athletics and hobby/leisure. Approximately 35 percent of the participants in athletics/sports were female. By a ratio of at least three to two, female participation exceeded males in drama, governance, music, honors, service, cheerleading, publications, and the social related activities (Gholson and Buser, 1981).

It would appear that Illinois secondary school students are participating extensively in the extra-class activity programs of their schools. Given the diversity of that mid-western state, we believe it is possible to generalize to the nation.

Supporting our conclusion is data reported in an NASSP national study. Some 75 percent of the students surveyed described themselves as "somewhat" or "very" active in the extra-class program. When asked how best to establish status and acceptance

among peers, 56 percent of the students indicated "active participation in extracurricular activities," 19 percent selected "academic success by earning high grades," 13 percent cited "active involvement in student government," 10 percent marked "driving a car to school," and 3 percent indicated "by not participating in student activities." Nearly one-third of the students considered extra-class activities more important than coursework in their school lives (Long, et al., 1977).

Problems

Lack of participation in activities has been an ongoing concern for school administrators, sponsors, and researchers. The problem exists today in spite of government and activity association efforts, court decisions, and local school board actions. A number of restrictions preempt students from active participation in extra-class activities: fees, transportation, grade point average, age, sex, scheduling, enrollment in academic courses, relevancy, poor leadership, marital status, state activity association requirements, and domination by clans or cliques in the school (Jackson, 1974).

Gholson (1976) reported that jobs outside of school is the most frequently identified (89 percent) reason that students do not participate in activity programs. Other reasons, in rank order by percent, include: activities scheduled after school (84 percent); irrelevant activities (83 percent); not selected for the activity (77 percent); activities are controlled by cliques (77 percent); grades are too low (76 percent); unaware of activities available (72 percent); activities are teacher dominated (71 percent); costs too much (70 percent); parents disapprove (70 percent); sponsors not interested (70 percent); not offered for their sex (53 percent); and not the "in thing" (47 percent).

Participation patterns have been the focus of a number of recent studies. Havighurst, et al. (1970) concluded that young people in high-status schools are typically more active in the extra-class activity program than students in other schools. Kleinert (1969) suggested ". . . the student's opportunity to participate in a number of activities becomes less as the high school grows larger. . . ."

Evans and Wagner (1971) assessed dollar costs for students attending schools in five regional accrediting associations. The results, listed from smallest total mean to the largest, were: Western Association, $798.28; Northwestern Association, $1,005.43; Middle States Association $1,033.53; Southern Association, $1,074.35; and North Central Association $1,240.00. These dollar expenses were *not* the annual cost per student; rather, they were the total of 150 variables which were reported as student expenses by the secondary schools in each of the regional associations.

In recent years, factors such as costs, social codes (including dress and grooming regulations), and policies governing extra-class activities have become matters of concern to students, parents, and school officials alike (Bailey, 1970). State and federal courts have been the scene of numerous conflicts between students and school districts involving student participation in extra-class activities. Among the many cases are the following: Breen v. Kahl (1969); Crews v. Clones (1970); Scoville v. Board of Education of Joliet (Illinois) Township High School District (1970); Jacobs v. Board of Commissioners (1973); and Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969) (*Students and Schools*, 1975).

The national picture with respect to student participation in extra-class programs remains unclear. Buser (1971) said the most frequently reported change in extra-class policies by schools of all sizes was the reduction or removal of academic restrictions for participation in activities in general, and student government in particular. Shortly thereafter, Jackson (1974) expressed concern about restrictions that prohibited or reduced student participation.

Although the literature related to activity program participation suggests benefits such as leadership development, useful skills and knowledge, creativity, recognition/honors, and indicates that success in college and life in general are by-products of participation in extra-class activities, it also reports very real limitations with which students must cope. Educational leaders must address these factors.

Sponsorship and Faculty Acceptance

In recent years, as teachers have become more directly involved in the decision-making process through professional organizations and negotiated contracts, the issues of extra duty, legal responsibilities, liability, and extra pay for extra work have become increasingly important to teachers, administrators, and patrons of the school. For those teachers who sponsor activities, the question of extra pay for extra duty is a valid one.

Gholson (1979) reported that 45 percent of the nation's teachers volunteered for their sponsorship duties. In excess of one-fourth (26 percent) of the sponsors had responsibility for more than four different activities, and one-fourth sponsored two activities. Three in 10 sponsors devoted between three and five hours per week to sponsorship duties. Just under 25 percent spent more than 11 hours per week with extra duty assignments. Ninety percent devoted portions of their weekend time, and 95 percent devoted portions of their evenings to sponsorship responsibilities.

Fretwell (1931) noted " . . . Teachers shall accept, wholeheartedly, the responsibilities of developing the school extracurricular

(program)." The related literature of the 1960s and 1970s suggests that contemporary teachers are not "wholeheartedly" accepting extra duty. Sponsorship of extra-class activities appears to be changing in that lay persons are becoming involved in the role which has been, until recently, teacher directed.

Havighurst, et al. (1970) reported that in some 700 secondary schools in the 45 largest cities of the nation, 13 percent of the schools frequently involved laymen in planning and supervising student activities; 42 percent reported that laymen were sometimes used; and 42 percent said that they were never used. Echoing these findings, Weldy (1975) noted the increased frequency with which school authorities are employing aides, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, and classified employees in extra-class assignments. Long, et al. (1977) noted that, when asked if nonteachers should be able to serve as activity sponsors, some 53 percent of the nation's school administrators answered in the affirmative, while 47 percent responded negatively.

There are, of course, legal, professional, and traditional issues raised by these practices. However, Jackson (1974) noted that not one of the 50 states refers to training in the area of student activities in its teaching certification requirements. He said, " . . . there is virtually no other part of the school program which operates with untrained personnel to the extent that the student activity program does."

While 78 percent of the nation's students believe their teacher-sponsors need additional training in activity management, they participate anyway. At the same time, 52 percent of the teacher-sponsors of the nation had received "no specific training" for their extra-class assignments, and some 72 percent indicated a desire to receive training at some future time (Gholson, 1979).

There is no doubt that schools of education need to devote more effort in preparing future teachers for extra-class assignments. Further, teacher candidates themselves should ensure personal preparation for extra duty assignments as well as for their specific subject areas. The development of viable extra-class activity programs is often almost totally dependent upon the quality and commitment of the sponsors.

Scheduling of Activities

Scheduling is a perennial issue with which school administrators must cope. Among the methods used to accommodate activities are: use of a rotating schedule; shortening class periods one day per week to gain time for an activity period; use of the homeroom; the replacement of the homeroom period with an activity period; after-school meetings; and before and after school sessions.

Extra-school meetings present problems, especially for students who have jobs after school, or for those who rely upon school-provided transportation. Miller, et al. (1956) identified a number of advantages that support the scheduling of activity periods during the regular school day:

1. All pupils may participate.
2. Transported pupils will be able to participate.
3. Faculty sponsors may manage their activity assignment within the regular school day.
4. Coordination, supervision, and evaluation of the activity period is made easier.
5. Since regular academic classes are not in session, the pupil of lower scholastic achievement can participate in the activities without sacrificing time from other schoolwork.
6. Faculty members will probably participate more fully.
7. It is possible for the school to control the number of activities in which a student participates.

Dumas and Beckner (1968) noted that scheduling activities during the regular school day has become more common. By 1976 school administrators in the nation noted that activities, other than interscholastic sports, were scheduled during the school day by: modification of the class schedule (35 percent); before and after the school day (24 percent); an activity period (20 percent); after the school day (19 percent); and before the school day (1.4 percent) (Gholson, 1976).

Regulating the demands of groups outside the school who solicit student time and talent is an issue related to scheduling of extra-class activities. Students are often removed from school during school hours at the request of community and civic groups. Weldy and Wilson (1966) and Weldy (1971) recognized the problem and suggested that boards of education should offer policy statements or criteria that could be used by school administrators to regulate the demands of such groups.

Conclusion

The future of activity programs seems certain. Students will continue to demand relevant and meaningful extra-class activities. If the school cannot or will not provide such programs, students will find alternatives in the community.

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